

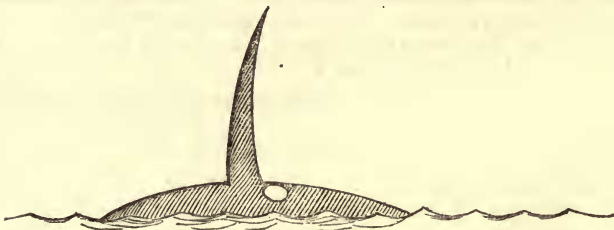
XXXIII.—*Additions to the Fauna of Ireland, including species new to that of Britain;—with Notes on rare species.* By WILLIAM THOMPSON, Esq., Pres. Nat. Hist. and Philos. Society of Belfast.

MAMMALIA.

High-finned Cachalot, *Physeter tursio*, Linn.

I AM happy to be enabled to join my friend Professor Bell (see *British Mammalia*, p. 512) in maintaining the existence of this species, which Cuvier, from the unsatisfactory nature of the data respecting it, believed to be fictitious:—even yet no proper description or figure has been published.

Professor Bell comes to his conclusion on information to which Cuvier had not access, and which was communicated to him by Mr. Barclay of Zetland. The occurrence of the species on the coast of Ireland was made known to me by Capt. Thomas Walker, who replied as follows to a letter requesting the fullest information on the subject:—“Kilmore, Bridgetown, Wexford, July 28, 1846:—As to the High-finned Cachalots, I saw them myself about seven years ago, and only know them to have been so from the descriptions in works of natural history which I consulted to find out what they were. There were either five or seven of them—I now forget which number—but I think the latter, and two of them were much larger than the rest, apparently about twenty-five feet long, from comparing them with the length of the boat in which I was. When first I saw one, I thought it was a cot [small flat-bottomed boat] at anchor with her tarred sail made up to the mast; more then rose, and they crossed in a long file the bows of my boat so close, that I put about the boat (though of seven tons burthen) fearing they would upset her. When I put about, they were not more than three or four yards from me; the back fin appeared about ten or twelve feet high, and had either before or behind it (I cannot now recollect which) a round white



Appearance of the High-finned Cachalot as seen by Capt. Walker.

spot on the back; all the rest of the body that showed was black like a porpoise. I did not see the head or tail, nor more than a portion of the back: they went steadily, not rolling like a porpoise.”

There certainly is no proof here that the species noticed was a *Physeter*, but, that it was what has been called the High-finned

Cachalot does not in my opinion admit of doubt. In Templeton's 'Catalogue of the Vertebrate Animals of Ireland,' the *Physeter tursio* is noticed, but merely in the following words:—"Thrown ashore on the western coast occasionally."

BIRDS.

The White Wagtail, *Motacilla alba*, Linn., Gould; Yarrell, Brit. Birds, Supp. p. 22,

is included on the following testimony of Mr. R. Ball. In a letter to me dated Dublin, June 19, 1846, it was stated, that a few days before, when at Roundwood, he had seen a specimen of the true *Motacilla alba* as distinguished from *M. Yarrellii*. It was remarked:—"We watched it for some time, though at a short distance from us, with a small telescope used for such purposes; its beautiful plumage was very distinct from that of the common species, and its habit much more sedate than is usual with Wagtails: it 'wagged' but little, and walked about demurely.—I am quite sure that I have often seen the species before." As the bird was not actually obtained, its occurrence would not be inserted here without my having perfect reliance on the knowledge and acute observation of my informant.

Bonaparte's Sandpiper?

Schinz's Sandpiper, Eyton, Gould, Yarr.

Tringa Bonapartei, Schlegel, Rev. Crit. Oiseaux Eur. p. 89*.

Tringa Schinzi, Bonap.

is believed on circumstantial evidence to have been once obtained in Ireland.

In the Belfast museum there is a specimen of this bird, respecting which positive information cannot now be obtained, but it is considered to have been shot in the bay here from the circumstance of its having been preserved in a manner peculiar to a taxidermist who set up a fresh "sandpiper" (as it is called in his book) for the collection in the spring of 1836, which, all circumstances considered, was most probably this bird—he never set up any *Tringa* from dried skins. I have compared the specimen with the American one described and figured by Mr. Yarrell, and found it quite identical in species: this is the individual noticed in the second edition of this author's 'British Birds,' vol. iii. p. 74.

Only one of these birds, recorded by Mr. Eyton as killed in Shropshire, has been obtained in Great Britain. Its occurrence on the continent of Europe is not noticed in the latest works that I have seen (Temminck, part 4; Keyserling and Blasius; Schlegel). North America is its native country.

Purple Waterhen, *Porphyrio hyacinthinus*, Temm.

A communication from Richard Chute, Esq. of Blennerville, county

* This name is given to the species on account of Brehm having bestowed the same name on a different *Tringa*.

of Kerry—a gentleman who has contributed much to our knowledge of the birds of that part of Ireland—written on the 17th of March 1846, mentioned his having that day received for examination a stuffed specimen of a bird which in a fresh state had been blown in upon the coast near Brandon :—that it was of a species unknown as British, and not described in any work to which he had access. A detailed description of it was therefore sent that the writer might be informed of its species. The dimensions of the different parts, and the colour were so fully noted as to enable me at once to reply that the bird must be the *Porphyrio hyacinthinus*. When in London some time afterwards, I applied the description to a bird of this species in the British Museum, and found a perfect agreement.

It is unnecessary to repeat the dimensions of the bird, which was of full adult size, but the description of the plumage may be given as denoting its age :—the sex was not looked to in the preparation of the specimen. “Head, throat, neck, breast, all the under parts, the wing-feathers, and most of the wing-coverts are of a greenish purple, throwing out different shades in the sun; indeed, the wings and lower parts of the neck are more of a royal purple; the throat and about the eyes a greenish purple not unlike the colour of the tail of a Kingfisher, but brighter;—the back, shoulders, upper wing-coverts and tail are of a bottle-green; the under tail-coverts white. The parts of the feathers all over the bird that are not exposed are of a dark brown; the edges of the green feathers have a very slight tinge of purple. Bill, frontal plate and legs red.”

This beautiful species inhabits the south of Europe and north of Africa: the most western locality noticed as inhabited by it in the works of Temminck (vol. ii. p. 699, and vol. iv. p. 443) and Schlegel (p. cii) is the island of Sardinia*. An isolated instance however of an individual being procured in a marsh in Dauphiny is recorded in the 4th part of Temminck's work—published in 1840.

The bird obtained in Ireland was found about the first week of November 1845, lying dead in a ditch near the village of Brandon, which is on the sea-coast. It came under the inspection of Dr. Williams of Dingle in a recent state before being skinned for preservation. The specimen was given to Capt. Clifford, Inspector of the Coast Guard there, preserved and stuffed by one of the men under his command, and subsequently presented to Mr. Chute.

Fulmar Petrel, *Procellaria glacialis*, Linn.

Among ornithological notes made by the Rev. Joseph Stopford—a gentleman well-acquainted with our native birds—and communicated to Dr. Harvey of Cork (by whom I have been favoured with them) is one of a Fulmar having been shot at Inchidoney Island, on the southern coast, in 1832 by Capt. Hungerford. It was sent to the writer, by whom it was presented to Sir Charles Paget, then forming a collection of birds at Cove. In January 1846, Mr. T. W. Warren

* Information on the species is given in the ‘Magazine of Zoology and Botany,’ vol. ii. p. 353.

of Dublin kindly communicated to me a detailed description of a bird shot on the North Strand, Dublin Bay, on the 1st of that month, mentioning at the same time that it was a species which had never before come under his notice, nor that of Mr. Glennon, bird-preserved, through whose hands so many rare birds have passed within the last thirty years. The description marked it as a Fulmar in adult plumage, and on my calling Mr. R. Ball's attention to the circumstance, he saw the bird and confirmed the fact of its being so.

Note.—Belted Kingfisher, *Alcedo alcyon*, Linn.

When noticing in the 'Annals' for the month of December last (vol. xvi. p. 430*) that a specimen of this bird shot in the county of Meath had been sent to Dublin to be preserved, it was remarked that a second individual had about the same time been seen in the county of Wicklow. Although I had not a doubt that the bird observed in the latter locality was really of this species, it is desirable to embrace this opportunity of stating further that it was subsequently shot, and proved to be so. It is now in the collection of T. W. Warren, Esq. The first-killed bird was purchased for the museum of Trinity College, Dublin.

FISHES.

Black Sea Bream, *Cantharus lineatus*, Mont. (sp.). *Cantharus griseus*, Cuv. & Val.

To Dr. J. L. Drummond we are indebted for the addition of this species to our fauna. On the 18th of May 1846 he obtained a fine specimen, which was taken on a hand-line with lug-worm (*Arenicola piscatorum*, Lam.) as bait, on "foul ground" at Cultra Point, Belfast Bay. My friend drew up an ample description (zoological and anatomical) of the specimen, which he carefully preserved and kindly sent to me. I make the following selection from his notes:—

"Length from snout to middle of caudal fin 16 inches; breadth at shoulder $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches; weight 3 lbs.

"D. 10 + 11; P. 10 (the fifth longest); V. 1 + 5; A. 1 + 11; C. 17. Branch. 5.

"D.-fin, almost black in colour, rises from a deep groove in the back.

"Whole fish of a dark leaden hue; lateral line very conspicuous, black, broad, and of similar breadth throughout—less than one-third the depth of the fish from the back; upper lobe of C.-fin longer than the lower; eyes large, yellowish, irides dark brown; scales large, firmly imbedded in the skin, transparent: the colour of the black lines is in the skin itself and is seen through the transparent scale.

"Cæca wide, about $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch long, their walls very thin, as were those of the stomach: both nearly transparent; swimming-bladder large and silvery.

"Intestine except at lower end very thin, rather long, very wide,

* See additional note in the January Number (vol. xvii. p. 69).

and containing large masses of vegetable matter, which in the microscope seemed to be chiefly *Ceramium rubrum* and *Rhodomela subfusca* deprived of their parenchyma, but their walls remaining entire and transparent. In the lower part of the intestine was the operculum apparently of a whelk (*Buccinum undatum*), with the firm muscular white part of the animal firmly attached to it and unaffected by the digestive process, showing probably that vegetable food is that natural to the fish. The specimen was a male, the milt very solid; presenting no appearance of spermatozoa when broken down and magnified."

Mr. Couch says of this species that—"it takes the common baits which fishermen employ for other fish, but feeds much on marine vegetables, upon which it becomes exceedingly fat," Yarr. B. F. vol. i. p. 131. This single specimen, as will be seen from the preceding notes, attests the correctness of the remarks respecting both bait and food.

All the British localities for this species named in the work just cited are on the extreme southern line of the English coast.

Sword-fish, *Xiphias gladius*, Linn.?

Mr. R. Ball has supplied me with an extract from a book in which donations to the museum of Trinity College, Dublin, were entered. It announces the receipt of the "Sword-bone of the *Monoceros* or Sword-fish, together with the socket of the eye and remains of an animal taken out of its maw. This fish was taken in a net on the coast of Wexford, but is very seldom known to visit that coast. Presented by Mr. Carey (Carew?), 1786?"

Mr. Ball is of opinion that this note applies to the weapon, &c. of a *Xiphias* in the museum, and not to the Sea Unicorn, *Monodon monoceros*, Linn., which might also possibly occur on the Irish coast. I have been told, but not with sufficient certainty to announce it, of the occurrence of the *Xiphias* upon another occasion on the southern coast.

Remora, *Echeneis remora*, Linn.

A letter from Mr. R. Ball, dated Dublin, July 29, 1846, informed me that Mr. N. A. Nicholson had that morning brought him a fresh specimen of this fish, which he found adhering to the gills of a large shark, which with the aid of a fisherman he captured at Clontarf, Dublin Bay, on the preceding night: it was observed in shallow water and driven ashore. A second *Remora* was adherent to the gills at the opposite side, but when disturbed, it made its way inwards by the branchial orifices, and was not seen again. Mr. Ball afterwards saw the fish on which the *Remora* was found; it was a Blue Shark (*Carcharias glaucus*) of a beautifully blue colour, and 10 feet 1 inch in length.

Lancelet, *Amphioxus lanceolatus*, Pallas (sp.); Yarr. Brit. Fishes.

Three specimens of this extraordinary fish with which I have been favoured, were dredged on sand from a depth of forty-five fathoms off

